

History of the Hampton Police Division

The area that is now known as the City of Hampton was originally occupied by the Kecoughtan Indians. But, in 1610 the area became occupied by settlers. During the Civil War, Hampton was burned by Confederate troops to prevent it from being used by the advancing Federal Army. On August 7, 1861, Col. John Bankhead Magruder of the Confederate Army gave orders to burn Hampton. All the formal records were lost in the fires that consumed the city.

The Town of Hampton was incorporated as a Town of the Second Class on May 26, 1887. The earliest accounts of Hampton's police force are found in the "Town Ordinances" of 1888. At that time the Mayor served as "ex-officio Chief of Police." However, law enforcement duties were carried out by the Town Sergeant who was assisted by four constables. The Town Sergeant received a \$30 per month salary "with fees." The constables received a \$30 a month salary.

The earliest available City of Hampton Directory was for the year 1896. T. J. Giddings was listed as the Town Sergeant, J.O. Hicks and Thomas Candy were noted as constables. At this time, the entire police force consisted of three people. In 1900, Fred Cunningham was the Town Sergeant and there were three police officers. Then, in 1903 there were four police officers and by 1906 the number increased to five.

By 1908, Hampton was incorporated as a City of the Second Class and the title Town Sergeant was changed to City Sergeant. Then in 1920, the City of Hampton police force had increased to six officers plus the City Sergeant.

On September 1, 1920, the City of Hampton adopted a City Manager and a five member City Council form of government. Hampton's first City Manager was George L. Rinkliff who had been the Assistant City Manager in Springfield, Ohio, and had been recommended to Hampton by the City Manager of Norfolk, Virginia. On November 1, 1920, Rinkliff abolished the position of City Sergeant and appointed Eugene C. Caton as Hampton's first "Chief of Police." Chief Caton had been a Hampton police officer for three years prior to becoming Chief.

Chief Caton served until 1927, when he was shifted to the position of Sergeant and Sergeant J. J. Lindsay was appointed "Acting Chief of Police." In 1928, Henry S. Curtis was appointed Chief of Police and served until 1945. The force was increased to eight police officers in 1931 and to ten by 1937. Then in 1946, Thomas L. Parker was appointed as Acting Chief of Police and served until 1949 when Lloyd H. Nicholson was appointed to serve as Chief.

On July 1, 1952, the county government was abolished and Elizabeth City County, Phoebus, and the City of Hampton were consolidated as a single city called "Hampton." Before this consolidation, there was a County Sheriff and County Constables in addition to the city officers.

Chief Nicholson served as Chief of Police until 1966 when he was succeeded by John J. Lucey who served from 1966-1971. In September 1971, Pat G. Minetti was appointed "Acting Chief" and in February 1972, was appointed Chief of Police for the Hampton Police Division.

In 1959, the Hampton Police Division moved into a new headquarters building on the corner of Lincoln

and King Streets. The Police Division Headquarters was located here for 18 years and today the building still stands and is known as the "Carmel Center".

On December 11, 1975, the ground breaking ceremony was conducted across the street for a new Public Safety Building. This innovative building was designed as a five level, split floor plan that gives the various police activities accessibility to other areas, while still ensuring that the integrity of specialized operations is maintained. On April 24, 1977, the Police Division Headquarters moved into the new 43,888 square foot brick and glass building. This was a major step in the modernization process that had been going on for some time under the leadership of Chief P.G. Minetti.

On November 20, 1988, the Hampton Police Division completed all the requirements and was awarded Accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) This was a major accomplishment as the Hampton Police Division was only the 80th law enforcement agency in the nation, and the 12th in the State of Virginia, at that time, to receive the coveted seal of Accreditation.

Chief P.G. Minetti retired January 15, 2000, ending a 45-year career with Hampton Police Division, having served 28 of those years as Chief. Thomas H. Townsend was appointed Acting Chief until his appointment as Hampton's Police Chief on November 2, 2000. Thereafter, Chief Townsend served the Division for 4 years as Chief before retiring in December, 2003. Charles R. Jordan, Jr., served as Acting Police Chief from January 1, 2004, until his appointment as Hampton's Chief of Police on February 11, 2004. After serving 8 years as Chief with the Division, Chief Jordan retired on December 1, 2012.

After Chief Jordan's retirement, retired Chief Townsend was called back to serve as Interim Chief of Police until a new Chief of Police was appointed. On October 7, 2013, Chief Terry Sult was sworn in as the new Hampton Police Chief.